

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending and rejected in the present application. Claims 1, 9 and 10 are herein amended. No new matter has been presented.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Examiner asserts that Claim 1, lines 10 and 11 recite the phrase “the base part of the wire (12) is provided with a coming-off preventing bent”, which is awkwardly and confusingly worded.

Applicants note that the claims recite “the base part of the wire (12) is provided with a coming-off preventing bent portion”; however, the Examiner did not note the word “portion” after the modifying phrase “coming-off preventing bent”.

Applicants herein clarify claim 1 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An interdental brush comprising:

bristles (11);

a wire (12) with which the bristles (11) are twisted; and

a handle (13) attached to the wire, wherein

the handle (13) is composed of a main body (21) and a sub-body (22),

the main body (21) is provided with a longitudinal hole (41) into which a base part of the wire (12) is inserted, and a lateral hole (43) intersecting the longitudinal hole (41) from opposing sides of the longitudinal hole,

the base part of the wire (12) is provided with a ~~coming-off preventing~~ bent portion (51) formed so as to be exposed to the lateral hole (43) and wherein the bent portion (51) of the wire protrudes into at least one of the opposing sides of the lateral hole (43) hole so as to prevent longitudinal removal of the wire (12) from the longitudinal hole (41), and

the sub-body (22) is provided with an engagement portion (52) filling the lateral hole (43) so as to surround a periphery of the bent portion (51).

Claims 9 and 10 are similarly amended.

Such amendment address the rejection under §112, and distinguishes the claimed longitudinal hole over the hole (8) of “Hideo”, which does not comprise opposing sides.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103(a)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by “Hideo”, JP 10-155546. Claims 2-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hideo in view of Blass 6,325,626.

Applicants herein amend claims 1, 9 and 10 to clarify the invention. Thereafter, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections because the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to teach the inventive structure of the invention.

Applicants previously argued that the difference between claim 1 of the subject application and Hideo is that the member identified with reference numeral (7) in Hideo is a push stick (construction tool) for opening the horizontal hole (8) reaching the hole (4) in the handle part 5 and concurrently for bending the brush rod 1. This push stick (7) is removed after it is used for bending the brush rod, and is therefore not a member constituting the interdental brush. In summary, Applicants argued that the interdental brush taught by Hideo does not include the engagement portion (52) described in the present invention.

The Examiner counters that the push stick can be considered as engagement portions, presumably because even the unfinished prior art device can be used to reject the claims.

Applicants note the above clarification of the claims as noted in the section above pertaining to rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112.

Subsequently, Applicants disagree with the rejections because it is clear that each lateral hole (43) intersects the longitudinal hole (41) from opposing sides of the longitudinal hole as claimed, rather than the hole (8) of Hideo intersecting its longitudinal hole from only one side.

More importantly, the claims are clarified to recite that the bent portion (51) of the wire protrudes into at least one of the opposing sides of the lateral hole (43) hole so as to prevent longitudinal removal of the wire (12) from the longitudinal hole (41). This is different from the structure of Hideo, wherein it is the friction of the wire in the longitudinal hole that appears to hold the wire in the longitudinal hole.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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